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### Transportation and Communication

*An American Railroad Builder: John Murray Forbes.* By HENRY GREENLEAF PEARSON. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company. 1911. Pp. vii, 196. \$1.25.)

In this interesting volume we have portrayed the life and activities of a forceful and attractive personality. John Murray Forbes was born in 1813, as the sixth child of a well-known Boston family. Forced by the straitened circumstances and death of his father to go to work at the age of fifteen, he entered his uncle's counting house, from which he was soon sent to China in a position of trust and responsibility. At the age of twenty-four he was back in Boston as a merchant with a comfortable fortune. In 1846 he was drawn into the railroad world by John W. Brooks, an able young engineer who had grasped the possibilities of western expansion. By him Forbes was persuaded to assume the presidency and secure the necessary capital to purchase the Michigan Central railroad from the state of Michigan. Once launched upon this enterprise there was no turning back; additional capital was soon needed to reconstruct, extend, and equip the decrepit road. Soon the competition of the reckless builders of the Michigan Southern compelled an extension of the line to Chicago, and then the establishment of eastern connections. It was a period of feverish expansion and fierce competition, and into this turmoil of work Forbes threw himself with enthusiasm. During the panic of 1857 his aid was invaluable, and by his energy and simple honesty he brought his road safely through the crisis.

With the westward extension of railroad building, it became necessary for the Michigan Central to secure western connections, and the stockholders of the older road accordingly bought control in one after another of the various links which later made up the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy railroad. Of this, Forbes was director from 1857 to 1898 and president from 1878 to 1881. Here, as before, his work was chiefly that of securing the necessary capital, and of maintaining a sound financial policy.

This activity was interrupted by the Civil War, during which Forbes plunged with characteristic vigor into various lines of public service. Recruiting men, insisting upon business efficiency in the departments at Washington, going on a secret mission to England, working for the development of an aggressive war sentiment in the North through the use of the press—in unofficial ways he worked unceasingly for what he conceived to be right. After the war he again led the fight for honest methods of construction and finance in the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy road, but after securing a victory on this point he transferred his heavy labors

to others, and from 1881 to the end of his life, in 1898, lived quietly in his home near Boston.

Mr. Pearson has written sympathetically and vividly, and has given an adequate biography of an important character. The book is one of the valuable and interesting sort that tells not merely what has been done in the world of industry, but how it has been done, and makes clear the importance of the human factor in our economic development.

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*Cours d'Economie Politique, Volume VI. Les Travaux Publics et les Transports.* By C. COLSON. Second edition, revised. (Paris: Félix Alcan. 1910. Pp. 528. 6 fr.)

A volume from Colson, the inspector general of bridges and ways and a *directeur* of the French railways, is worthy of most careful consideration. He has been a most diligent and able student of transportation, especially that of the railways. His large volume, entitled *Transports et Tarifs* (3d ed., 1908) has no superior, if indeed an equal. The sixth volume of his great work *Cours d'Economie*, that on public works and transportation, covers largely the same field, not so exhaustively at some points, but more completely in its consideration of competition and combination, the roles of the state and private enterprise, and the association of the state and the companies in transportation tasks. Colson gives the comparative situations and facts, reviewed historically, of the various phases of transportation and communication; and suggests, by means of statistics, graphics, or mathematics, the present and probable results of the application of certain policies and principles.

The value of service is comprehensively analyzed and its ability to serve as a basis of rate making considered; and so is the cost of service. The distance rate or that according to borèmes or zones receives a practical and sufficiently comprehensive treatment. The vital aspects and problems of transportation by means of the roads and streets, the interior waterways, the ports and maritime canals, and the railways, and of communication by post, telegraph or telephone, all receive sympathetic yet accurate and practical treatment. The relative position of competition in transportation—between the railways, and between the railways and other carriers, interior or coastwise—is comprehensively shown. His treatment